

CONNECTION

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

July 2007

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



July 10, 2007 marks the end of my first year as the Director of DRPT. This has been the most challenging and fast paced year in my professional career, but it has also been very rewarding. Over the past year, the DRPT team has achieved many significant goals with the support of our key stakeholders.

We have successfully advanced the Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project through preliminary engineering, received a Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration and secured the local funding agreements through the project partners. The project is scheduled to begin construction in early 2008, pending federal approval. Other key transit initiatives advanced this year include the Norfolk Light Rail Transit project, a statewide human service transportation plan and strategic planning initiatives in priority corridors.

Key rail enhancement, industrial access and preservation projects have been advanced to support passenger and freight rail initiatives across the state and promote economic development by maintaining or creating over 3,700 jobs in the Commonwealth.

Finally, DRPT completed an organizational assessment and initiated the development of its first business plan, which will lay the foundation for DRPT to be a stronger advocate and deliver more public benefits for our programs. Several accountability and performance initiatives are already in progress, such as an asset management plan, better program monitoring systems and public benefit models for rail, transit and congestion management programs.

While the DRPT team has accomplished a lot in the last 12 months, there's more to be done. This year, we will develop comprehensive state plans for rail, transit and congestion management, implement our asset management system, complete our organizational restructuring, and continue to advance key projects and initiatives.

We have set lofty goals but I am confident that my team, with your support, will accomplish much more in the coming year.

Matthew Tucker- Agency Director

KEY ISSUES

DRPT Begins Strategic Planning Initiatives

Following last quarter's announcement that DRPT would begin developing a set of strategic planning documents for the agency, work is now underway to develop key planning documents.

Two working groups have been established to provide feedback on these documents, one for transit and one for rail initiatives. These groups will provide an opportunity for rail and transit stakeholders to participate in DRPT's strategic planning process. In addition, a public involvement plan is being developed for critical planning documents to ensure that the public also has an opportunity to participate.

The first documents now under development include the Asset Management Plan, the Passenger Rail and Transit Sustainability Plan, an enhanced Public Benefit Model for transit and rail programs, and an Intercity Passenger Rail Development Review, including options to better fund and sustain passenger rail service in Virginia.

DRPT Strategic Assessment Nears Completion- *First Agency Business Plan Under Development*

Part One and Part Two of the DRPT Strategic Assessment are now complete, including an assessment of the agency's performance to-date against the agency mandate and strategies for improvement.

Through Part Three, currently underway, DRPT has begun to implement key changes to its business processes, adjust the agency's internal organizational structure and other improvements identified through the Strategic Assessment. The Program Management Consultant contract is out for bids, and the PMC will be on board in August 2007.

In addition, the first ever Business Plan in the history of DRPT is now under development. The DRPT Business Plan will be an annual work plan to establish well-defined annual goals and the budget, schedule and scope of specific projects required to meet those goals each year.

The 2007 DRPT Business Plan is currently scheduled for completion in August 2007. In future years, the Business Plan will be issued on July 1st, to correspond with the beginning of each fiscal year.

THE SMARTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS • July 2007

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Governor Kaine Kicks Off Portsmouth Loop Transit

Service: On July 6, 2007, Governor Kaine participated in an event to mark the beginning of a new circulator bus in downtown Portsmouth. The Portsmouth Loop will provide new service in the downtown Portsmouth area, with a connection to the Paddlewheel Ferry to Norfolk, beginning in early 2008. The Loop is one of the first hybrid buses in Virginia, reducing fuel consumption by 25-30% over conventional diesel buses.

During the event, the Virginia Transit Association presented Governor Kaine with an award for excellence in recognition of his support for transit during this year's General Assembly session, which saw record increases in funding for transit statewide.

Rail Advisory Board Meeting: On July 12, 2007 the Rail Advisory Board held its quarterly meeting in Richmond. Key agenda topics included an update on Amtrak federal reauthorization, a presentation on strategies to improve VRE and Amtrak passenger rail performance in Virginia, an update on I-95 and I-81 rail corridor key projects and the announcement of the new rail community workshops to be held after each Board meeting to solicit feedback on DRPT's strategic rail planning initiatives. The first workshop will be held immediately following the October 2007 Rail Advisory Board meeting.

Annual Virginia TDM Workshop: DRPT's annual Transportation Demand Management workshop was held from July 11-13, 2007 in Charlottesville. Topics included media and marketing strategies for TDM, an update on the statewide 511 program, a session on Telework!VA and evaluating the performance of TDM programs.

Roanoke Region Intermodal Facility Update: In the April 2007 Connection, DRPT indicated that a decision on the intermodal facility site location was anticipated by the end of April 2007. At the end of April, DRPT received a letter from the City of Salem which included a proposal to advance the Colorado St. site in their jurisdiction. DRPT was intrigued by the proposal, and deferred the decision on the facility location to evaluate the Colorado St. site in more detail. The evaluation of the Colorado St. site is still in progress, and will be completed in early fall. In the meantime, all ten sites submitted for the potential location of the intermodal facility remain under consideration.

STATUS OF KEY PROJECTS AND STUDIES

◆ **Dulles Corridor Metrorail Project:** DRPT is working with MWAA to complete the final steps necessary to ensure a smooth transfer of project management to MWAA. DRPT will continue to provide project support through a DRPT project manager as the project advances through construction.

◆ **I-95/395/495 HOT Lanes Working Group:** DRPT has been working with VDOT to prepare for citizen meetings on the HOT Lanes project and the related Transit/TDM study. Five meetings have been scheduled between July 23 - July 30, 2007 in Alexandria, Arlington, Woodbridge, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania. During each meeting, a presentation and fact sheets will be provided. In addition, displays will provide more detailed information and agency staff will be available to answer questions. Comments will be collected and evaluated as part of the project development process.

◆ **Passenger Rail and Transit Sustainability Plan:** DRPT has begun developing the agency's Passenger Rail and Transit Sustainability Plan, to be completed in two parts. The first part will establish service design guidelines based on land use, density and ridership performance goals for all modes of passenger rail and transit service. The second part will develop a policy document to provide a framework for efficient and effective investment of public funds by identifying goals and core principles for services that will be financially sustainable and efficient. The draft document will be available for review by both transit and rail working groups. The plan is scheduled for completion in fall 2007.

◆ **Intercity Passenger Rail Development Review:** DRPT is developing planning documents to identify costs and shared funding strategies for federal, state and locally supported intercity passenger rail service in Virginia. These documents will include an abstract report on Virginia intercity passenger rail funding strategies and costs based on a national study, a cost differential report on intercity rail operations compared to other states and a final report on funding strategies for consideration in developing sustainable intercity rail in Virginia. The draft documents will be available for review by the rail working group, and they are scheduled for completion in fall 2007.

◆ **Rail/Transit Program Public Benefit Models:** DRPT is developing a public benefit model for each of its programs, including rail, transit and congestion management. In addition, a statewide assessment of the socio-economic benefits of rail, transit and congestion management programs will be conducted. The deliverables include a methodology for calculating the public benefits of projects and assessing the socio-economic benefits of projects, in addition to determining the return on investment. The draft documents will be available for review by the rail and transit working groups, and will include public comment periods. The documents are scheduled for completion in spring 2008.

◆ **Richmond Transit Study Update:** The first technical memo on this study has provided demographic data and forecasts, a review of surveys, land use plans and other technical information. The next meeting of the Study Advisory committee is July 20, 2007.